

## SR 167 Corridor Plan

### Corridor Working Group Meeting – Meeting Summary

July 19, 2005

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Centennial Conference Rooms, North and South  
400 West Gowe Street, Kent 98032

#### Attendees

**WSDOT**

Carol Hunter  
Mike Sallis  
Ron Landon  
Barbara Ivanov  
Ron Paananen  
David Forte  
Chad Brown

**City of Kent**

Cathy Mooney  
Chad Bieren  
Ken Langholz

**Perteet**

Loren Sand  
Michael Booth  
Michael Stringam

**City of Edgewood**

Dave Lorenzen  
Kevin Stender

**Pierce County**

Cindy Larkin

**City of Auburn**

Dennis Dowdy  
Roger Thordarson

**King County**

Ann Martin  
Lisa Schafer

**Puget Sound Regional Council**

Charlie Howard

**EnviroIssues**

Kristine dos Remedios

**Port of Tacoma**

Dick Dorsett

#### Welcome and Introductions

*Carol Hunter, WSDOT*

Carol Hunter, WSDOT, welcomed the group and thanked them for coming. All attendees introduced themselves and the agency they represent. Carol reviewed the agenda and started the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to review and approve the SR 167 Corridor Project Goals and Objectives and Screening Criteria, and to provide a preliminary introduction to the SR 167 HOT Lanes Project that the Corridor Working Group (CWG) will also play an advisory role for, as discussed at the previous CWG meeting in June.

Carol also briefly discussed the issue of the new 2005 Transportation Improvement Package, or the “gas tax,” that is now in jeopardy due to the initiative recall. WSDOT is currently trying to prioritize projects that will be allowed to move ahead and others that will need to be put on hold. The tax recall does not have direct implications for the SR 167 Corridor Project, as it is funded by the Nickel Package. The recall may affect later stages of the project, which did receive \$80 million, as well the construction funding for the SR 167 HOT lanes.

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The partners also discussed the idea of modifying the SR 167 Corridor Plan Potential Bottleneck Projects Map, in order to include a color-coding system to indicate how or if projects are currently funded. Projects that are already funded (Nickel Package) will be shaded green. Projects that may be funded by the new Transportation Improvement Package will be shaded yellow. Projects that need future funding (RTID) will be shaded red. David Forte, WSDOT, agreed that the status of project funding should be indicated on display boards but WSDOT may have a standardized way to indicate funding on project maps and agreed to look into this issue.

### **Review and Finalize Project Goals and Objectives**

*Carol Hunter, WSDOT*

Carol explained that it was the goal of the project team to finalize the document titled Project Goals and Objectives for the SR 167 Corridor Plan with the partners at the meeting. The CWG reviewed the document prior to the meeting and the project team had made some revisions, based on partner discussions. Carol noted that it would be difficult to measure how the plan “accommodates planned regional growth within the Urban Growth Area (UGA).” This may need to become a “yes” or “no” criteria of whether the improvements are done inside or outside the UGA.

### **Discussion Topics:**

- Ann Martin, King County, asked if the language on page two of the document, under “What is the Vision of the Corridor Plan,” could be changed to “up to two additional lanes,” in order to build in some flexibility with the idea that two lanes would be included in the preferred option to address current and future congestion on SR 167. King County is not entirely comfortable with adding two lanes in each direction but it can appreciate that this is the discussion that is happening. Terminology that is more flexible was used for the I-405 project. Changing the wording here shows that we are trying to accommodate additional capacity along the corridor but the addition of two lanes does not become the Corridor Plan vision.
- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, stated that there is a need for the two additional lanes to be general-purpose lanes. It is important to include the need for the two lanes in the Vision in order to have some authority to acquire the necessary right of way for corridor improvements and that at the end of this study it should be clear where additional right of way is needed.
- Ann Martin, King County, believed that the creation of two general-purpose lanes was an issue and there was discussion of having an option for those lanes to be managed lanes. Also, as the projects enter into the

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environmental process, two additional lanes may not be an option for a number of reasons. There needs to be a compromise on what is the more appropriate vision. The more flexible language does not preclude the two lanes and will still let you look at where right-of-way may be needed.

- Ron Paananen, WSDOT, stated that it is hard to get funding to purchase right of way until a project moves through the environmental process. You cannot purchase right-of-way until you also have a right of way plan.
- Carol Hunter, WSDOT, said that that the team will look at the previous vision language on this issue and revise the document accordingly.

### Review and Finalize Screening Criteria

*Michael Booth, Perteet*

Michael Booth, Perteet, asked the CWG partners to refer to the handout in the binder called SR 167 Corridor Study Screening Criteria. These criteria were discussed at the last CWG meeting. The changes to the criteria, as a result of partner discussion, are highlighted in red. Michael asked the partners if they had any additional changes.

Discussion followed regarding the criteria "Flood Relief" and "Minimize Sprawl."

The group agreed to the suggested changes made by the project team and CWG partners, as outlined in the following discussion.

### Discussion Topics:

- Ron Paananen, WSDOT, expressed that he did not understand the addition of "Flood Relief" as a criteria for the corridor projects.
- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, explained that at the last meeting, discussion regarding questionable culverts underneath SR 167 and elevated streets that cause flooding in the Valley might be an issue to address with future transportation improvements. Wetland values have been realized due to these "problems" and there may be opportunities to create enhanced habitat for fish in the valley.
- Ann Martin, King County, asked if the "Flood Relief" performance indicator was measuring whether the transportation improvements do not worsen existing conditions or corrects previous problems that were created. Michael explained that it would be important for the improvements not to worsen existing conditions.
- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, said that a better term for this criterion might be "Flood Plain Impacts" instead of "Flood Relief."

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- Loren Sand, Perteet, offered the idea of changing “Flood Relief” to “Opportunities for Drainage Improvements.” The partners agreed that this was an appropriate change to the criteria.
- Charlie Howard, PSRC, suggested that the criterion of “Minimize Sprawl” be changed to “Support Growth Management Act (GMA) and Urban Centers.” Measuring how a project minimized sprawl may be difficult, but it is easier to determine whether or not a project supports existing urban centers in the corridor.

### **Discuss Modeling Approach and Assumptions**

*Michael Stringam, Perteet*

Four handouts were provided in the CWG packet regarding the project’s travel demand forecasting model and the traffic operations analysis models. The handouts detail the different types of models that will be used for the SR 167 Corridor Project.

Michael began by explaining the travel demand forecasting model. This model helps the team understand how people travel around the region, including information about mode choice and trip generation. WSDOT is currently making significant upgrades to the 1998 PSRC model previously used on SR 167 to include information about road pricing, modal choice, value of time by vehicle class, time of day travel, and trip generation. These improvements are expected to be finished within the next month. The revised model will be called the “2005 Model” and will be used for the current SR 167 project. The model is coordinated with the I-405 and the SR 167 HOT lanes project models. It was suggested that the model be coordinated with the SR 167 extension project model as well.

The travel demand forecasting model would also be enhanced with local jurisdiction data near the key interchanges being modeled. Cross checks with the SR 164 and SR 169 models will occur on this level. In addition, improved truck travel demand information will be added. Historically, truck traffic was modeled as a percentage of total traffic volumes. The SR 167 model will be developed by looking at where key trucking operations and facilities are in the Valley and Fastrucks will be used to refine the PSRC EMME/2 truck module. These enhancements will provide more detail regarding truck activity and travel in the Valley.

Michael then referred to the matrix, outlining the travel demand-forecasting model. The base year, to which the model will be calibrated, will be the year 2000. Future land uses will be forecasted for the years 2010, 2020, and 2030. In each year, different enhancements to the transportation network will be assumed, based on projected project completion dates. The SR 167 extension

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to I-5 was added into the projects assumed to be complete for 2020. The matrix also outlines what projects will be evaluated for each forecasted year.

### Discussion Topics:

- Ann Martin, King County, said that if the travel demand forecasting model is coordinated with the SR 167 HOT Lanes Project and the I-405 Project models, it should also coordinate with the SR 167 Extension Project model.
- Dick Dorsett, Port of Tacoma, suggested adding in the SR 167 extension to I-5 into the assumptions.
- Ann Martin, King County, expressed concern that other projects in the Valley are not using 2000 as their base year. Other projects, such as SR 164 and SR 169 may be using 2003 or 2004 as their base years, as these corridors had experienced so much growth within the past few years and stakeholders wanted to see this incorporated into the model baseline. It is important that all Valley projects use the same numbers or base year to model improvements. Michael explained that the baseline year for the traffic operations model is 2005 so growth since 2000 will be represented in the model identifying local operational issues.
- Barb Ivanov, WSDOT, asked how the detailed trucking information would be gathered. Michael explained that the team would talk directly with the trucking industries in the corridor about truck volumes, major sources, and travel routes, to inform the forecasting model.
- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, asked if the Fasttruck model was calibrated for a regional or state level. Michael explained that PSRC did some work on that model and it is developed on a regional basis.
- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, shared that he heard some trucking companies divert off of I-5 in order to use the SR 167 corridor. He asked if the model would be calibrated to show this actual practice or if there was a way to account for this in the model. Additionally, as I-5 becomes more congested, this practice may increase, which could further influence the truck traffic patterns and volumes on SR 167.

Michael Stringam, Perteet, continued with an explanation of the traffic operations model. This model will help the team look at specific intersections, beyond the SR 167 corridor and its ramps, and how improvements to those interchanges will help localized intersection operations. Modeling out to the year 2030 is not recommended for this analysis, as that is too far into the future for this level of detail.

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The model will be coordinated with the I-405 and the SR 167 HOT Lanes project models. It was suggested that the model be coordinated with the SR 167 Extension Project model as well, like the travel demand forecasting model. Enhancements with local jurisdiction data will be made and truck survey data will also be incorporated to refine the model.

Michael then referred to the matrix, outlining the traffic operations forecasting model. The base year, to which the model will be calibrated, will be 2005. The results of the travel demand forecasting model would be added into the operations model in order to show how localized areas will function in the forecast years. In each year, different enhancements to the transportation network will be assumed, based on projected project completion dates. The SR 167 extension to I-5 was added into the projects assumed to be complete for 2020. The matrix also outlined what projects will be evaluated for each forecasted year.

### Discussion:

- Roger Thordarson, City of Auburn, expressed concern that there was not a project identified to relieve the backups on the interchange ramp coming off of 15<sup>th</sup> SW, going southbound onto SR 167. That intersection often is at a virtual stop while traffic is merging on that interchange. Michael explained that the team would be modeling the missing ramps at SR 18, which includes the interchange identified by Roger.
- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, asked if input from truckers on truck operations and traffic had been received yet. Michael explained that the truck survey had not been sent out yet, but the team has learned through past interactions with the truckers association that lengthening ramps, in order to provide more room for trucks to slow down or speed up when exiting or entering the facility, is the major issue.
- Barb Ivanov, WSDOT, asked if a sensitivity analysis for signalization would be done. Michael said that if the truck surveys show that there are specific access points with timing issues, then an analysis would be done.
- Barb Ivanov, WSDOT, asked if assumptions about the rate of growth of truck traffic were based on land use growth. Michael explained that yes, there are standard assumptions that allow us to assume a rate of growth of truck traffic, based on the generation of different types of development in the corridor. Fastrucks makes the assumption of how many truck trips are generated based on the type of land use growth. Barb Ivanov expressed some concern with this, as a lot of the industries along the corridor are not 24/7 type operations. It may be a good idea to test the Fastrucks assumptions to see if the industries along SR 167 follow those assumptions.

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- Barb Ivanov, WSDOT, asked if there was a projected annual increase for Port traffic. Michael explained that direct industry interviews would help inform assumptions made about how Port traffic, and the through traffic they generate, will increase.
- Cindy Larkin, Pierce County, said that Pierce County had experienced a lot of growth since 2000. She wanted to know if the operational model, with a baseline in 2005, would show that growth, even though the base year for the forecasting model will be 2000. Michael explained that yes, the growth would be accounted for by the 2005 baseline of the operations model. The team also plans to cross check real travel times with what the models forecast to make sure the models are appropriately calibrated.

### Discuss Potential Projects

*Loren Sand, Perteet*

Loren Sand, Perteet, directed the group to the handout titled SR 167 Corridor Investment Options. The purpose of the discussion is to consider the list of bottleneck projects that should be selected for further traffic operational analysis. Four Corridor Options will be analyzed for the traffic simulation modeling for the RTID exercise. Fourteen other bottleneck options are also shown on the handout. The first three bottleneck options were identified in the first SR 167 Corridor Study. The remaining eleven options were added to the list through conversations with the CWG partners and stakeholders. Traffic simulation modeling has already been initiated for bottleneck options four, five, six, and eight.

Loren asked the group if other projects should be added to the list. The intent is to narrow the list down to eight, in order to do further operational analysis on the options. Some options may easily be combined, if they are in close proximity to one another.

### Discussion:

- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, asked if the truck survey will be considered before the group finalizes a list of options to model, in order to consider their areas of concerns. Loren explained that if there were specific locations of concern, they could be added to this list as potential options to model.
- Ann Martin, King County, asked if option four also included direct access for busses. Lisa Schafer, King County, said that this was the same direct access Option discussed before for both train and bus commuters. It was suggested that the word Sounder be taken out of that option description, as the direct access would be for commuters taking the train and busses. Another CWG partner said that WSDOT might be moving forward with

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HOV ramp metering on Willis Street in Kent that may preclude that direct access. The team agreed to look into that issue.

### **Future Meetings – Schedule and Agenda**

*Carol Hunter, WSDOT*

Carol Hunter, WSDOT, informed the group that the CWG would take the month of August off, so the next CWG meeting would be in September, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month again. Unless the partners hear otherwise, the meeting will be held at the Kent Centennial Center, Centennial conference room again.

### **SR 167 HOT lanes Project**

Carol Hunter then introduced David Forte, WSDOT, who is working on the SR 167 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes project along with Nytasha Sowers, the SR 167 HOT Lanes project manager, who was not able to attend the CWG meeting. David provided an overview of the HOT lanes project and explained how the SR 167 CWG would be involved in the HOT lanes project.

WSDOT has been looking at a number of ways to increase the efficiency of the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane system as well as ways to reduce congestion in the Puget Sound area. HOT lanes, which have been implemented in other parts of the country, have been one way to accomplish this. HOT lanes take advantage of existing HOV lanes by allowing single occupancy vehicles (SOV) to use the excess capacity in HOV lanes for a fee, or a toll. The use of the HOV lane by SOVs is regulated by the cost of the toll, in order to maintain the efficiency of the HOV lanes for transit and carpools. It was determined that the SR 167 corridor was the most ideal place in the Puget Sound area to test out a HOT lanes system.

WSDOT then went to the legislature to obtain funding. The legislature approved funding for a HOT lanes pilot project, including environmental review, design and construction. Over the next 10 months the project will move toward about 15% design, including figuring out how the tolling operations will work. This first phase is fully funded and is expected to be complete in January 2006. The remaining funds to take the project through to construction are part of the 2005 Transportation Improvement Fund, which is affected by the recall discussed earlier in the meeting. The team is also pursuing an additional \$480,000 grant from the federal government in order to sustain the design phase.

David then passed out the latest SR 167 HOT Lanes brochure. The brochure outlines some of the details about the project and different designs being considered. Issues to consider include how many access points will be allowed along the HOT lane, how much will the tolls be, how transponders will be distributed to HOT lanes users, and how long should access points be, in order



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to make the entrances safe for drivers. It is the goal to stay within the existing right of way of the corridor, in order to reduce complications due to environmental impacts and to get the system up and running as soon as possible.

The existing SR 167 CWG will be used as the primary sounding board for the SR 167 HOT Lanes project. The standing CWG meeting will be used for HOT Lanes briefings as well, in order to reduce the number of meetings the partners need to attend. In addition, many of the consultants working on the SR 167 Corridor Project will also be working on the SR 167 HOT Lanes project, in order to increase information sharing and coordination when possible.

It is important to convey that the HOT Lanes project is a pilot project. WSDOT wanted to test the theory in the region. If the pilot proves to increase efficiency for the HOV and general-purpose lanes, the HOT lanes may become a permanent facility for SR 167, and may be added to other corridors in the region. If the HOT Lanes are not performing, WSDOT can pull back from the idea. Other cities, like Minneapolis, just implemented HOT Lanes for their transportation network. WSDOT hopes to take advantage of their findings as the SR 167 HOT Lanes Pilot Project moves through design.

### Discussion:

- Dick Dorsett, Port of Tacoma, asked about the public's reaction so far to the idea of a HOT Lane for SR 167. David explained that there have been proponents and opponents. It is the objective of the project team to make the system as user friendly as possible, with only one billing account for any fees collected by the state for transportation, including ferries, toll bridges or HOT Lanes tolls.
- Ann Martin, King County, said that the tolls would be regulated to maintain speeds for busses and HOV vehicles, which relived some of the concerns of HOV supporters and HOT Lanes opponents alike.
- One partner noted that a large part of society does not own credit cards. Some of these same people are the ones who will use HOT lanes. David agreed and noted that the business model for the project had not been set up yet. The team is considering ways to charge the toll so that all segments of society can use it. Most likely it will be a kind of debit system.
- Lisa Schafer, King County, asked if there would be a cash option. Meaning, if you were not from the area and traveling through, would you have the option of using the HOT Lane. David said that no, most likely you would need the electronic device to register the toll to use the lane.
- Ron Paananen, WSDOT, asked if there would ever be a time during peak hours that there would be no toll option. David said that yes, if the HOV

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system is flooded, no more SOVs could enter the HOT lanes. This option is important to maintain the HOV option.

- Lisa Schafer, King County, asked what the cost of the toll would be. David said that, preliminarily, the toll would range from \$1.25 to \$3.50, depending on capacity.
- Dick Dorsett, Port of Tacoma, asked if privacy issues had been discussed. David said that this was a major issue with HOT lanes systems. The media, in particular, wanted to know information about who was using the systems. WSDOT was able to make it so no personal information collected through the tolling system could be distributed. Personal information would be used for billing purposes only.
- Cindy Larkin, Pierce County, asked if there had been any public outreach about the HOT Lanes project. David said that WSDOT has engaged in extensive public outreach on the project and this effort will continue through this next phase.
- Chad Brown, WSDOT, asked how the HOT Lanes would be enforced. David explained that some of the funding would go to increased enforcement on the roads. The final design has yet to be determined but it may include an indication, such as a light, of whether or not a driver in the HOT Lane is in compliance when a vehicle enters the HOT Lane. This system will help law enforcement monitor vehicles entering and exiting the HOT Lanes.

**Next Meeting:** 9/20/05, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
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400 W. Gowe Street, Kent